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ABSTRACT

Authors of childrearing texts suggest that punishment is a horrifying experience having no positive influence on human relations. Authors of psychology texts are not as opposed but indicate that punishment is not appropriate when one attempts to help children. While some researchers denounce the use of punishment, they also invite further exploration of the issue. In contrast, other authors discuss punishment by presenting emotion-laden statements in an authoritative fashion. It seems fair to say that research has adequately substantiated the fact that punishment can effectively reduce misbehavior. A lingering argument against punishment concerns potentially damaging side effects; however, research indicates that such effects are infrequent and transitory. Another perspective on punishment can be gained from the Bible. The Bible says that punishment, including physical punishment, is valuable. It is the responsibility of parents to discipline, and it is the responsibility of childrearing professionals and society to support these parental responsibilities. (The concluding discussion focuses on seven points for maximizing the effectiveness of punishment and seven tips for proper punishment.) (RH)

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PUNISHMENT: SEVERAL PERSPECTIVES

by

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An Address Delivered at the Annual Conference of the National Association of School Psychologists

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Punishment

As a lead into the purpose of my comments, let me share with you a recent experience I had with a teacher (also a mother). As she entered my office she was very anxious and chose to stand rather than sit. This teacher is quite competent by many standards but lacks confidence in herself, and lacks assurance as to whether or not her interactions with children are good, bad, or neither. Both her verbal and nonverbal behavior communicated a clear message of her anxiety about sharing something of significance. As she became more relaxed she began sharing an experience which she had had with her four-year-old son. She explained that the source of her internal conflict stemmed from an experience in which she instructed her son that if he choose not to pick up his toys that he would not be allowed to attend a birthday party for his friend that afternoon. As the hours of the day wore on the child was reminded numerous times that he would not get to go to his friend's birthday party should he choose not to pick up the toys. The child continued to ignore the comments of his mother and as the hour arrived for him to go to the party his mother decided to follow through with her promise. Her following through became a great source of concern to her. The tears began to flow as she expressed her concern for the child's future acceptance in his social circle because she had not allowed him to attend the party. The message she expressed was that by using such punishment she might somehow effect her child's development in a negative way and cause him to suffer great emotional trauma in the future. I assured her that the probability of her son experiencing the anguish she was anticipating was minimal. Because the issue of punishment is so important in family living and education, I would like to review the

punishment literature from several perspectives in order to draw upon meaningful conclusions.

The Punishment Literature

The positions which psychological research and child-rearing professionals take on punishment seem to vary substantially. In reviewing the subject of punishment, I have attempted to accomplish four objectives: (1) review philosophical views of punishment reported in child-rearing texts; (2) consider what psychological textbooks say about punishment; (3) review the professional literature encompassing both empirical research and contrasting this with opinion papers which are presented as being factual; and (4) to discuss common concerns regarding the side effects of punishment.

Child-rearing Philosophies

Rudolph Dreikurs, who has produced perhaps the most influential and popular parenting literature in the last 20 years, is an ardent opponent of punishment and rewards as vehicles for behavior change. In his best selling book, Children: The Challenge (1964), he entitles one chapter "The Fallacy of Punishment and Reward" and cites five examples of how parents get "nowhere with these methods." While punishment is not defined in this book, the implications suggest that it is a way of interacting with children via spanking or emotional loss of control when parents become frustrated. Dreikurs (1972) in a second publication entitled The Challenge of Child Training: A Parent's Guide, states explicitly the negative effects of punishment. In explaining the necessity for children to display respect and observe order in the family he makes the following statement:

> But physical punishment is never requisite to this end, even when the child regards it as deserved. If parents only knew what their child feels and thinks when they strike him, they would recoil in horror and never lay a hand on him again. In the moment of chastisement, children who are frequently beaten develop frightening thoughts of hate and fury; even a wish for death of their tormentor is not at all rare. Can you really believe that any impulse toward good conduct will emerge from such experiences?

Dr. Haim G. Ginott (Between Parent and Child, 1965), suggests that the child who deserves punishment really just needs help in managing guilt and anger, and "not compliance with his request." "Punishment dramatically tells them; when you are angry--hit!" Going further, the suggestion is made for identifying more "civilized outlets for savage feelings, [instead of giving] our children a taste of the jungle." He indicates that "spanking" is wrong and recommends open discussion of misdeeds.

Under the influence of Dreikurs, Dinkmeyer and McKay (1982), distinguished the major differences between punishment and consequences. In discussing punishment, they point out that the "likely results" include the following:

> rebellion, desire for revenge, lack of self-discipline, sneakiness, irresponsibility, resentment, fear, confusion, feelings of hurt, guilt, desire to get even, feels unacceptable, feels can't make good decisions, desire to get back, demands compliance.

Dinkmeyer and McKay claim these results come about because of the "natural" characteristics of punishment, which are an emphasis on the power of personal authority; the failure for punishment to be related to a given act; the implications of moral judgment; an emphasis on past behavior; threats of disrespect, violence, or loss of love, either open or concealed; and demands for compliance.

Parents who so often have questions related to whether or not punishment is an acceptable means of behavior control may ask the question: "Is spanking a legitimate constructive form of discipline?" In addressing the issue specifically Eda LeShan (1970) a well-known child-rearing personality, answers this question as follows:

> No, it is not. Unequivocably! It may release your anger and clear the air when the atmosphere has gotten pretty tense and wound up, but it does not teach any constructive lesson about human relations, and, after all, that is what discipline is all about.

The following is taken from her book, Natural Parenthood, in order to explain a situation in which a mother is disciplining her child with spanking. She writes:

> I saw mom descending upon the little boy like a wrathful God slapping hard and howling, "This will teach you to hit someone smaller than you!"

If the implications made by these authors are accurate, then punishment is indeed a horrifying experience which will have no positive influence on human relation and is therefore not worthy of further

discussion. Before drawing our" conclusions, let's contrast these popular child-rearing philosophies with college psychology textbooks.

Psychological Textbook Reports

Ernest R. Hilgard and Richard C. Atkinson have developed perhaps the most popular and best selling introductory psychological textbook in the last three decades. They write the following:

> Punishment under some circumstances tends to fix the behavior rather than to eliminate it, perhaps as a consequence of the complex acquired motives based on punishment.
>
> The byproducts of punishment may be unfortunate. Punishment often leads to dislike of the punishing person, whether parent, teacher, or top sergeant, and to dislike of the activity that led to punishment.

Baron & Byrne in their textbook (Exploring Social Psychology) begin a discussion of the subject by indicating that it is "obvious" that punishment is effective in deterring overt aggression. Yet they go on to elaborate on the negative aspects of such types of control tactics, suggesting that it represents an attack against a person, serves as an aggressive model, and is only effective if used under appropriate conditions. The tone is "it works but watch out, it can backfire"; leaving the reader suspicious as to possible side effects several years down the road.

These authors are not as adamantly opposed to punishment as are the child-rearing philosophers yet they still leave one with the impression that punishment is not a good choice of actions to take when trying to help children. To understand some of this dissonance perhaps it is wise

to look at research on punishment and contrast this with opinion papers on punishment.

Empirical Research Versus Opinion Papers

Prior to the mid 1930s punishment was accepted as a necessary means of training children and controlling undesirable behavior. Hoge and Stocking (1912) demonstrated that trial and error learning was attained more rapidly when rewards were given for correct responding and punishment for incorrect responding; rather than depending strictly upon the reinforcement model. Expressing a similar view, Thorndike (1911) published a statement regarding the law of effect, which suggests that when a response is followed by a satisfying experience, that response will be strengthened. He also proposed the negative law of effect suggesting that when a response is followed by an annoying state of affairs it will be weakened.

It is interesting that Thorndike himself in 1932 was the first to reject the negative law of effect. The retraction of this law was based on an experiment in which human subjects were punished with the word "wrong" for incorrect choices and reinforced with the word "right" for correct choices. His findings indicate that the word "right" led to improved performance, whereas the word "wrong" had no modifying effect. Based on this experiment, Thorndike revised his interpretation of the punishment concept, and suggested that it was ineffective in the modification of behavior. In 1938, B. F. Skinner trained rats to press levers to receive food. After training, some rats received a slap on their paws when they pressed the bar. Skinner concluded punishment (the slap in this experiment) did not reduce the bar pressing behavior, except temporarily.

Estes (1944) began research to determine the extent to which an organism actually eliminated a response from its repertoire because of punishment. Based on a 1938 study by Skinner he was inclined to believe that responses were merely suppressed and capable of returning at any time rather than being eliminated. He conducted a series of 12 experiments which he made famous in his 1944 monograph, "An Experimental Study of Punishment."

Following an in-depth report of his findings, Estes cited the following conclusions:

> The generalized effects of punishment are probably mediated largely by the 'emotional' reaction aroused by the noxious stimulus.

In terms of punishment as a practical means of control of behavior, Estes wrote:

> Probably the most important practical implication of the present study is the demonstration that a response cannot be eliminated from an organism's repertoire more rapidly with the aid of punishment than without it.

In 1964 Richard Solomon, a well respected researcher, reviewed the punishment literature and asked how the psychological profession could seriously argue that punishment was ineffective. In the 1960s laboratory experiments on animals conclusively demonstrated punishment is effective in reducing undesirable behaviors in aniamls. Present research supports Thorndike's and Skinner's early findings that "mild punishers" are not very effective, but Estes' results were clearly shown to be incorrect.

Azrin and Holz (1966) who have done extensive empirical research with punishment have written a 67-page chapter addressing the issue explicitly. While acknowledging that many positive responses may occur as a result of punishment, they also point out a primary disadvantage, namely "social disruption." The final paragraph reads as follows:

> We may conclude, therefore, that the disruption of social behavior constitutes the primary disadvantage to the use of punishment. The changes in the punished response per se appear to be distinctly secondary in importance to the social products of the use of punishment.

Coopersmith (The Antecedents of Self-Esteem, 1967) conducted a study to determine the conditions and experiences associated with the development of high self-esteem. This research says something concerning what Azrin and Holz referred to as the "social products" of punishment. Children's level of self-esteem was assessed and their mothers' child-rearing attitudes were evaluated through the use of interviews and the Parent Attitude Research Instrument. In reviewing the author's findings related to permissiveness and punishment in child-rearing relationships, he says: "The net results appears to be that negative techniques (punishments) are likely to increase the likelihood that the (undesirable) behavior will recur and are liable to produce pernicious side effects." He also suggests that punishment directed against children with high self-esteem (by their parents) occurs under different conditions than children with low self-esteem, and in turn the high self-esteem children interpet the punishment differently. Coopersmith's study indicates that the child who feels that punishment follows misdeeds and is warranted, tends to accept the

idea that he is being dealt with in fairness and respect by his parents and professes the value of justice. This evidence contradicts Dreikurs belief that punishment is ineffective "even when the child regards it as deserved." This study furthermore indicates that there were no significant differences in the frequency of "negative control" between low, middle, and high self-esteem groups. The implications are that it is the manner in which punishment is employed that determines effectiveness. Two interesting relationships between self-esteem and control are brought out. "First, that the firmer and more demanding regulations are associated with higher self-esteem, and, second, that the frequency of punishment is unrelated to esteem even though the type of punishment is related."

Although some of these researchers denounce the use of punishment, they also invite further exploration of the issue. In contrast to empirical research some authors address punishment by presenting emotion-laden statements in an authoritative fashion. Let us first consider an article by Gilmartin (1979) entitled "The Case Against Spanking." He begins by suggesting that parents are leaning toward firmness, a situation he implies leads to violence. The following excerpts are taken from the Gilmartin article:

> Children who are frequently spanked tend to become highly resentful and distrusting of authority.
>
> Children who are often spanked tend to be conspicuously quieter, less articulate and more sullen . . . [and] tend to display a large amount of negativity . . . to people and to life.

After indicating that people who are nervous and tense (a condition caused by punishment) don't learn as efficiently as the relaxed but alert person; a suggestion is made which is grossly oversimplified; he writes:

> People who had been frequently spanked as children often remained nervous for many years--Shy, asocial people quite typically have a history of much corporal punishment.

Concerning self-image Gilmartin wrote:

> Frequent use of physical punishment is strongly associated with the development of low self-image in children. This is a scientifically established fact and is valid regardless of a parent's conscientious, well-meaning intentions.

Gilmartin cites Stanley Coopersmith as one who has provided scientific data leading to this "fact." He cites no reference but if he is taking his information from Coopersmith's well-known study entitled "Antecedents of Self-Esteem," he is seriously misrepresenting the results of the study. Coopersmith it appears in a general sense does not condone punishment, yet the results of his study shows that punishment which meets the principles of "effective punishment" as outlined by Schwartz (1978) and Azrin & Holz (1966) correlates positively with high self-esteem.

Maurer (1974) in a two-part article addressing corporal punishment, cites a number of references to credit punishment as the cause of juvenile delinquency, deviant behavior, rigidity, fixation, regression, primitivization, displacement, resignation, poor adjustment, aggression, bigotry, brutality, violence, inhibition of learning, and even

hyperactivity and minimal brain damage. Prior to discussing all these results of punishment, two theoretical models were presented, the Adlerian and Freudian psychoanalysis. Below Adlerian quotations cited in Maurer's article are presented with Maurer's responses; the psychoanalytic quotations seem to speak for themselves.

Adlerian

> Corporal punishment in childhood leads to low courage in adulthood.
>
> The punished student will want to avoid school, to look for means of escape, not means of meeting the difficulty.
>
> The punished shrug it off as the fortunes of war.
>
> Our classrooms are filled with acts of retaliation.

Maurer makes the following observation:

> These conclusions, laced in the telling with many examples culled from teachers' stories, are open to accusations of lack of rigor. Control groups are noticeably absent; populations observed are not described as to intelligence, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other variables. Reported improvements on application of these prescriptions were not subjected to confirmation by objective tests. Nor is there much evidence that Adlerians listen to or observe the objects of their concern with any degree of scientific curiosity.

Freudian

> The buttocks as the locus for the induction of pain (is considered) a safe locus. However, the anal region is also

precisely the major erotic zone at the time at which the child is likely to be beaten there. Thus it is aptly chosen to achieved deranged sexuality in adulthood.

Trauma in childhood, including corporal punishment, may be associated with an interruption of normal sexual development and lead to numerous forms of disorder.

Violent adults endured violence when they were young.

Side Effects of Punishment

While it is fair to say that research has adequately substantiated the fact that punishment can effectively reduce misbehavior; a lingering argument against it has been the potentially damaging side effects. While various contentions have been brought against the use of punishment none are so poignant as those which focus on side effects. Many parents have shed tears over the unknown damaging effects their children will suffer because of the parents' punishing act. A closer look at side effects may help to clarify this important consideration.

When addressing this issue it is important to realize that side effects involve any behaviors or traits of the object of punishment which occur or change in addition to those behaviors which are the target of suppression. Or in other words any effects which occur which were not desired. Four general side effect categories of punishment are presented below.

Emotional Disturbances

Numerous myths have developed over the years concerning the irrevocable emotional disturbances inflicted on the psyches of children who are punished. Maurer (1974) suggests that the etiology of deviant

behavior, poor adjustment, learning disabilities, and hyperactivity is in the use of corporal punishment. Many other so-called "experts" are telling us that emotional disturbance will result when unknowing parents rely upon punishment as a means of influencing behavior. It is important to bear in mind that most of these "experts" addressing emotional disturbances are among the child-rearing philosophers and that there is a notable absence of data on emotional side effects in the annals of empirical research on punishment.

Experimental support for the case of punishment as a cause of emotional disturbances is documented in a limited number of experiments focusing on neurosis in animals, Masserman (1943), Gantt (1944), and Maier (1949) have observed neurotic outcomes, attributed to punishment, in animal experimentation. While these experiments were done with care it is debatable whether the outcomes were a result of punishment or the lack of consistency and predictability of rewards and punishers. Many seem to be characterized by noncontingent consequation. Assertions that punishment is an ineffective controller of behavior and the source of neurotic symptoms are convincing only when considering their face validity.

A closer look at these studies adds insight regarding the effective use of punishment. Indeed, emotional disturbance may result from punishment. Yet, as indicated in many studies, punishment per se is not the cause of these neurotic symptoms but rather the punishment process does make a difference in behavior. While animal data provides a wealth of knowledge, the introduction of cognitive functioning adds a variable which changes the picture considerably.

There is no doubt that many children who have emotional problems have been punished often. On the other hand well-adjusted children, with high self-esteem and well-developed moral characteristics have often experienced punishment also (Coopersmith, 1970; Hoffman, 1970). At this time it is clear that evidence suggesting negative emotional side effects resulting from punishment is very bleak.

Aggression

The possibility of punishment leading to a display of aggressive behavior in children have been an issue of relevance for many years. In the laboratory, rats that have received electric shock have been observed attacking the grid floor, lever, or another rat. This behavior has been labeled illicited aggression (Ulrich & Azrin, 1962). Original studies of this behavior employing aversive stimulation were noncontingency based (O'Kelly & Streckel, 1939). Since this time however, Azrin and Holz (1966) have through extensive research verified these findings. The question as to whether or not the rats in the laboratory setting bears resemblance to human behavior is yet to be answered. Originating from a Freudian school of thought comes the issue of frustration-aggression. Does the onset of frustration lead to aggression? Walters and Grusec (1977) cite a number of studies suggesting that this is a phenomenon which presently seems to have validity. A number of questions however are left unanswered. Why does most of the research only show short-term negative effects? Why is it only the physical punishment that leads to aggression? Can other forms of punishment be equally as frustrating? Perhaps some of the questions can be answered in terms of imitation. Bandura's early work in imitation studies, as well as subsequent research, provides strong support for the contention

that children imitate aggression whether frustrated or not (Bandura & Huston, 1961; Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963; Hanrathy, Liebert, Morse, & Fernandez, 1969). While the evidence of aggression is supported by many studies, the difference between the experimental setting and the natural setting in which punishment typically occurs leave completely accurate and conclusive evidence without hope for an answer. In one survey based research study there was no evidence of positive correlations between physical punishment and aggression (Yarrow, Campbell, & Burton, 1968).

Generalization of Suppression

Generalized suppression is a concerning side effect which is dependent on desired outcome to determine if the results are positive or negative. For example: The research shows that initial suppression of the behaviors other than the target behavior are achieved, yet with time these effects tend to gradually disappear. There are situations in which generalization is desirable yet other situations where generalization is not desirable. The hope of the parent would certainly be that the child punished for climbing on the furniture at home would also generalize this to the neighbors furniture. Yet a parent who punishes a child for playing inappropriately with a friend would not want appropriate play with his other friends to dissipate. While research on this issue is available (Azrin & Holz, 1966; Hoing & Slivak, 1964; LaVoie, 1964; Konstartareas, 1964), Walters & Grusec (1977) indicate that this is an area requiring greater research to determine actual effects. It appears that concern is not whether the effects are desirable or undesirable but rather what variables must be known, understood, and controlled to obtain the desired effect.

Escape from Punishment

To what extent does punishment promote escape from the punishing agent or the environment in which the punishment occurs? The relevance of this issue concerns the ability of one person to influence the behavior of another. Obviously if the child who is punished by a parent decides to run away and not return, there is little that the parent can do to modify the behavior of the child. Woodworth & Scholsberg (1954) indicate that "The typical response to punishment is escape." While there is evidence to support this statement, it also represents a gross overgeneralization, since escape from punishment has reinforcing properties, it seems self-evident that one would escape or gravitate toward that which is reinforcing. While at times escape is a desired result of punishment (e.g., children playing in the street), Azrin, Hake, Holz, and Hutchinson (1965) suggest that the tendency of an organism to escape from a punishing situation may represent a major disadvantage in the use of punishment as an applied means of controlling behavior. The research evidence seems to suggest that escape does result if the punishment agent is not also a source of reinforcement. In most child-rearing situations the parent who punishes by withholding privileges has also been the source of providing privileges initially, thus the punishing agent is also a source of rewards. Anyone who has worked with abused children knows that they have ambivalent feelings about being separated from their punishing parents. This may be influenced by the fact that the abusive parent has also been the greatest source of security in the child's life. If the parent were strictly a source of punishment escape would seem far more probable. Walters and Grusec (1977) state that

> People who make negative comments could hardly be effective as punishing agents if they had not established themselves as a valuable source of approval in the first place.

The point to be made is simply this: if the concern is that punishment will lead to avoidance of the punishing agent, it seems reasonable to determine what the ratio of rewards to punishment delivered by the agent is. If a child is rewarded more than punished by the agent, attempts to escape would no doubt be minimal.

Thus even with the highly objective research we can detect sentiments of skepticism regarding unknown and possible damaging side effects.

As we draw conclusions based on reviewing the professional literature just presented it seems that perhaps the most relevant concern is not "Does or doesn't punishment work?" but rather "Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?" My view which is in direct opposition to Azrin and Holz (1966) is that the possible "social product" resulting from punishment is a secondary concern to the more pertinent issue of punishment resulting in the desired change of responding. In fact, the social product concern seems to be fabricated. An inside look at the research which has been reported on undesirable side effects of punishment indicates that these are infrequent and transitory. After reviewing the literature on side effects Newsome, Favell and Rincover (1983) conclude that,

> Most of the undesirable side effects described lasted only for a few minutes or days, were quickly responsive to treatment if they did not disappear spontaneously, and constituted a

relatively small and ethically justified price to pay in return for the elimination of much more detrimental behaviors.

I have attempted to this point to present a clear review of the literature without imposing my personal biases. At this point however, I will consider the two main sources which have influenced by biases.

Books Reviewing Punishment Research

In the past ten years there have been two major books written that have reviewed the research done on punishment. In 1977 Joan Grusec, a Ph.D. from Stanford with main research interests in imitation and child-rearing practices, and Gary Walters, an expert in animal experimentation, collaborated to review all the research on animals and humans. In their book entitled Punishment they conclude punishment is effective in controlling behavior, AND they point out the negative side effects often credited to punishment (i.e., causes emotional problems and trauma, causes aggression, causes avoidance, generalizes to reduce positive behaviors) are false. Walters' and Grusec's closing statement at the end of their book is

> . . . a good case can be made that punishment is a more effective technique for behavior change than is reinforcement. And this leads us to an inescapable conclusion: Punishment will always be a necessary tool for behavioral change.

In 1983, Academic Press published a book authored by Saul Axelrod and Jack Apsche. The book, The Effects of Punishment on Human Behavior, also reviews the psychological research literature and emphasizes punishment including spankings can be very effective in controlling behavior. They also review and discount the oft-claimed negative side

effects of punishment. They also point out some rather interesting facts uncovered by experimentation such as:

> The relationship between the child and adult who administers punishment does not deteriorate but in fact improves, as long as the adult is the source of positive experiences as well as punishment (Bucker & Louaas, 1968; Louaas, et al., 1965; Merbaum, 1973; Simmons & Louaas, 1969; Tate & Baroff, 1966).

They also point out that reinforcement approaches are not always successful in helping control misbehaving children.

In twenty years of laboratory research on animals and field research on children, Robinson has seen punishment used as an effective method for controlling behavior, and has not seen punishment have any of the negative side effects claimed.

Does that mean there is no research to support the idea that punishment is ineffective and damaging to children?

No, it doesn't mean that at all. Any seasoned researcher knows that any topic with substantial research time devoted to it always produces studies supporting both sides of any argument. It is a natural result of testing null hypotheses. What should happen, however, is that substantially more studies should produce results supporting one position over another. And that is exactly what has happened in the case of punishment. There is much more support for the idea that punishment is effective than its alternative.

Punishment from the Perspective of Christian Ethics

Another perspective from which to evaluate the value of punishment is from society's ethics. I believe it is fair to say that our

country's value system is based on the Judeo-Christian ethic. So, one way to look at punishment is to look at what is said about it in the Bible.

One does not have to spend much time investigating the principles in the Bible to come to the conclusion that it is a book about brotherly love. If there is one word to describe what the teaching in the Bible centers around, it would be love--the love between husband and wife, sister and brother, parent and child.

With brotherly love as the central theme, the Bible explains that the growth of every member of the human race is based on the principle of freedom or choice. The actions of man, woman and child are not limited and totally controlled by what is often labelled as genetic instincts. Human beings have the opportunity to make choices and learn from the choices they make. These choices we are able to make are not restricted to only "correct choices." The Bible points out that mankind can also choose to make mistakes or bad choices. In fact, according to scripture, only one person who walked this earth never made a mistake. All the rest of all fall into a group in which making mistakes has been a major factor of our actions.

In 1970 Dr. James Dobson wrote the book Dare to Discipline. In his book he stated:

> The purpose of scripture is to demonstrate that the parent and relationship with his child should be modeled after God's relationship with man. In its ultimate beauty, that interaction is characterized by abundant love--a love unparalleled in tenderness and mercy. This same love leads the benevolent father to guide, correct--and even bring some pain to the

child when it is necessary for his eventual good. I find it difficult to comprehend how this message has been so thoroughly misunderstood during the past 20 years.

In Proverbs 22 verse 15 it is said, "Foolishness is found in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."

Now some people may argue that the rod spoken of in this instance is not a paddle, but a measuring stick to evaluate the child with. Several other passages, however, can clarify the issue.

In Proverbs 23 verses 13, 14, it is said, "Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."

I had a well educated and successful couple come to see me about their teenage daughter. The mother said, "I received my degree in psychology back East at a well-known university, and was taught not to use spanking or strong forms of discipline. I can now see that some of that was needed in my home." Her daughter, then on drugs, drinking, and running away, was then placed in a home that believed in Proverbs 23. Four months later the girl was back home with her family, and doing very well. She stayed away from her old friends and struck up a much closer relationship with her parents.

In Proverbs 29 verse 15 it is said, "The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."

A popular present-day parenting belief is to let children, particularly teenagers, make all their own decisions, without reproving or using the rod at all. This scripture leaves little doubt as to the responsibility parents have in this matter.

Proverbs 29 verse 17 goes on to tell us what the results of proper correction will be. It says, "Correct thy son and he shall give ye rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."

In Hebrews 12:5-8 the Lord says:

> And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:
>
> From whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.
>
> If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?
>
> But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Further on in verse 11 he says:

> Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peacable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

This verse leaves little doubt that there will be times all we parents need to discipline to the degree it is unpleasant. Trying to be totally positive all the time will not work.

In line with these scriptures it is wise to look at how the Lord deals with his most beloved prophets. Does he put his arm around them and say, "Hey, you are my joy so I won't let anything punitive ever happen to you. You will grow and develop through totally positive experiences." No, even his most chosen get beat up, stabled, and have great family problems.

From the scriptures and the way the Lord treats his chosen ones, it is difficult to believe that punishment has no value in helping us grow and develop. Either punishment--including physical punishment--has a value in life, or our Judeo-Christian ethic has a strong sadistic base to it.

The Role of Punishment in Every Day Life

As I have indicated thus far, there is considerable controversy concerning the use of punishment. Let's now look at punishment in the practical sense.

Schwartz (1978) is the individual who most closely approximated the message to be delivered in this paper. In addressing the question, "Does Punishment Work?," he writes the following:

> In light of all the evidence discussed in the preceding pages, it seems odd that one should ask this question at all. If the experiments we have been discussing show anything at all, surely it must be that punishment works. Yet the question continues to be asked.

After addressing his first question he presents the most critical point for parents and their children, "Under what conditions does punishment work?" The following seven points are presented as a means for maximizing effectiveness:

1. Arrange a dependency between the reinforcer and an alternative response. Establish alternative routes to the goal which are not undesirable. Complete suppression of a response with only mild punishment is possible if an alternative response which produces the same reinforcement is available. If one's child continues to steal

pennies in the face of intense punishment, then establishing a set of little jobs for earning pennies may successfully eliminate stealing. [Axelrod & Apsche (1983), emphasize the point that the relationship between an adult who administers punishment improves as long as the adult is a source of positive experiences as well as punishments.]

2. The punishing stimulus should be as intense as possible.
3. The delay between response and punishment should be as short as possible.
4. The punishing stimulus should not be introduced in mild form and gradually increased in intensity. It should be introduced at whatever intensity one has determined will be the maximum. Individuals will differ in deciding what the maximum punishment intensity they use will be. Having made this decision, however, they should use that punishment from the outset.
5. Punishment should be certain. When responses are punished intermittently, the effectiveness of the punishment procedure is reduced.
6. Have the delivery of punishment serve as a signal (S^-) that reinforcement is not available for the punished response. If this is not possible, then
7. Decrease the frequency with which the reinforcer is available as a consequence of the response.

Now, besides the psychological research and the scriptures, what about the role of pain and punishment in our daily lives? Is pain such

as that produced by spankings cruel and unusual? Is pain a primitive and ineffective means of influencing a child's actions?

Suppose you seriously sprained your ankle. How does your mind convince you not to walk on it? You know your mind has the power to make you think positively and suggest, "Hey, wouldn't you like to hop around on one foot for a week or so?"

However, instead, your body uses a rather simple, straight-forward and effective means to keep you off the ankle. STEP ON THAT ANKLE AND YOU WILL FEEL PAIN!

Pain is very natural part of life that greets each of us almost daily. We catch fingers in car doors, touch hot stoves, cut our fingers, and bite our tongues on occasion. Now there are people who irrationally get mad at doors, stoves, ankles and tongues when they feel pain, but most of us handle such painful situations without becoming neurotic or psychotic. In fact such painful experiences are usually excellent learning experiences that we obviously don't want to repeat.

Let me share with you quickly some tips for proper punishment. As you are aware by now, I have been arguing that we professionals need to expand our research in the field of punishment. There is a great deal more we could know. But let me list some of the Do's and Don'ts that seem to be true to use punishment practically and effectively:

1. Do not demean a child when using punishment. Focus on the actions of the child, not her integrity or self-worth.
2. Do not hold grudges for a child's misbehavior. If misbehavior occurs punish it, then forget it. Do not repeatedly remind a child of past misdeeds.

3. Provide alternative ways of acting for the child that can result in positive payoffs. One of the most well-known principles of punishment is that punishment does effectively decrease misbehavior WHEN a child has alternative ways of acting available that pay off.
4. Use one part punishment to nine parts positive attention and reward. Keep a daily record of how often you reprimand your child versus the number of times you positively interact and reward your child. If your reprimands equal the number of positives you give your child, you are punishing too much. Something is wrong. Start focusing more on the positive things your child does. Instead of always catching your child being bad, spend more time "catching your child being good."
5. Don't talk it out with your child just before you punish him. Apply the punishment; get it over with; and discuss it a few hours later, after the effect of the punishment has time to settle in.
6. Keep in mind punishment can take many forms. While spankings can work, so can having a child sit on a chair, going to his room, taking away privileges, or taking back allowance money (a form of what we call response Cost). Children can differ in what is punishing to them. For one child a spanking may work, for another sitting on a chair is much more unpleasant.
7. Punish as soon as possible. Do not put it off. Delay dilutes the effectiveness of punishment.

In Summation

In conclusion let me summarize, or perhaps point out more clearly the purpose of this paper. I believe that for several decades many falsehoods have been propagated in the area of parenting. Telling parents there is a better way without using punishment has not worked. Teachers are frustrated in schools and now demanding some effective disciplinary approaches. The past approaches of just trying to talk it out without using firmness is failing with police forces and school districts being forced to try to ignore the problem rather than deal with it. I daily run into parents who claim they cannot get the school staffs or police to help them in trying to be firm with their child. School staff and the police are repeatedly restricted from using punitive methods because, "They are ineffective and should not be used."

The almost universal response by all in our society is throw up our hands give up on trying to effectively discipline teenagers, and turn the responsibility over to them and say, "Well, it's your decision whether you go to school, get married, use drugs, be noncompliant to parental authority, or be promiscuous."

Who out there really believes that fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen-year-olds will be bette off with less discipline because they tend to rebel to discipline?

I believe well-intentioned parents find few things more difficult than trying to be firm with their child when it is needed. It is not only the right, but the responsibility of parents and society to be firm at times with children. It is too easy a quick fix to say, "Well, it is up to you, child; it is not my responsibility." Such fixes cost us in future years.

It is the responsibility of parents to discipline, and it is the responsibility of child-rearing professionals and society to support these parental responsibilities. Child-rearing professionals are obligated to conduct research with an open mind and provide honest and effective disciplinary alternatives that can be given to parents. Hernstein states it best: "No topic in behavioral analysis has greater immediate relevance to human affairs than punishment." I believe effective disciplinary methods are out there. I believe corporal punishment is and can be a natural "part," and I emphasize part, of life's disciplinary system. I challenge you, to commit yourself and not take anyone's thoughts on this issue (including mine), but to search out what has been done; and resolve to help in furthering our knowledge of such important issues.

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